Senate Intelligence Panel May Subpoena FBI Agents

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Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho) said yesterday the Senate inteligence committee will, if necessary, subpoena FBI agents to obtain information from the Justice Department that has been sougbt since mid-May.

"There are indications of further complications with respect to the access by our committee staff to FBI agents and the right of the committee staff to conduct interviews with these agents," said Church, the committee's chairman.

"It seems that the more serious the inquiry, that is to say, the more it has to do or may have to do with improprieties, the more obstacies are put up by the Justice Department to the committee. This we can't really tolerate," Church told reporters at a briefing.

He said the committee intends "to get proof and not to be deterred by any action, any obstacle thrown up by any executive department. Now, if it becomes necessary to subpoena FBI agents in order to obtain their testimony, then clearly the committee is prepared to do this."

The committee yesterday heard testimony, in a closed session on assassination allegations, from former De-McNamara, now president of the World Bank, and Mcfense Secretary Robert S. George Bundy, who was national security adviser under former Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and now is president of the Ford Foundation.

After testifying 2½ hours in the afternoon, McNamara told reporters, "I cannot believe that President Kennedy or Robert Kennedy or any senior member of the President's administration ever authorized the planning or the action leading to the assassination of any political leader."

McNamara declined to comment further, saying it would be "quite inappropriate" to do so.

Bundy told reporters after his morning tsetimony, "The most important point I made is that as far as I ever knew or know now, no one in the White House or at the Cabinet level ever gave any approval of any kind to any CIA effort to assassinate anyone."

Bundy continued, "I told the committee in particular that it is wholly inconsistent with what I know of President Kennedy and his brother, Robert, that either of them would ever have given any such order or authorization or consent to anyone through any channel."

Bundy also declined to say anything more.

Church said the committee had not yet received a reply to the letter it sent Thursday to Attorney General Edward H. Levi and FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley asking them to appear before the committee to discuss its problems in obtaining documents and other information from the Justice Department and FBI.

Church said the Senate committee has yet to hear "a satisfactory explanation as to why FBI agents cannot be interrogated by members of the committee staff, why new obstructions have been placed in the path of the committee by the Justice Department.

"All of this runs counter, of course, to President Ford's assurance that this is an open administration and that this committee would have a full and fair opportunity to do its job, which is to get at the truth of charges of wrongdoing on the part of the very agencies that are responsible for upholding the law," Church said.

Frederick A. O. Schwarz, the committee's counsel, said Thursday that the withheld Justice Department documents are needed to check on allegations of FBI political abuses, such as the use of secret files, electronic surveillance, break-ins, support of radical organizations and questionable use of FBI informers.